



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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to have befallen an examination-ridden empire. Probably the world has never seen a finer body of educationalists than those who at the present moment man our schools, both Boys' and Girls'. But the originality, the fine initiative, of these most able men and women is practically lost. The schools are examination-ridden, and the heads can strike out no important new lines. Let us begin our efforts by believing in one another, parents in teachers and teachers in parents. Both parents and teachers have the one desire, the advance of the child along the lines of character. Both groan equally under the limitations of the present system. Let us have courage, and united and concerted action will overthrow this Juggernaut of our own erection.

While upon this subject we should like to pay our tribute of respectful admiration to the present government for the splendid achievement of the "New Code." The demon of the competitive examination is practically exorcised from our primary schools. We no longer have every little flock divided by a black line into the sheep who pass and the goats who fail—the sheep made precious to the school in a money sense, the goats a cause of loss and heart burnings; the inspections, times of feverish, terrible anxiety to teachers and children, as to which side of the line each little candidate shall fall. All this has given place under the more mild and merciful New Code to the conditions of a genial inspection. All the children are liable to be examined, but not on the lines of *pass or fail*; but in order that the inspector may judge if every child is well taught according to his age and standard, and is advancing along the lines of character and conduct, as well as on those of certain prescribed studies. We believe that no such service has been done to the state for many a long year as this of the abolition of what is called "payment by results," in other words, of the competitive examination with its inevitable pass or fail. Enormous pent-up forces have thus been liberated in both teachers and children—forces which will, we believe, go to the raising of character, the ruling of conduct. As the chief concern of a State is the bettering of its men and women, it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this initiative. Shall those of us whose children attend other than primary schools be slow to follow so good a lead?

CHATS WITH NURSE.

BY TWO MOTHERS.

III. NURSERY ACCIDENTS.

"WHAT is the matter, Janet?" said Mrs. Ernest, as she entered the nursery, drawn thither by cries of pain and alarm, and the hasty summons of Anne, the under nurse.

Pip or Button up the Nose.—"Master Herbert has gone and shoved an orange pip up his nose, ma'am, and I don't know whatever we shall do to get it out."

"Take it quietly," said Mrs. Ernest, as she drew the boy against her knees and said firmly "Cease crying, Herbert, and the pip will be down directly."

"Oh, oh! it hurts," screamed the frightened child.

"Stop crying. Now, blow down hard," said Mrs. Ernest, as she placed her finger firmly and flatly on the opposite side of the nose.

But the pip did not come at the first blow.

"Blow hard again," the mother repeated, still pressing on the opposite nostril with an inch and a half of her forefinger. This time the pip flew as from a pea flirt, and the frightened boy looked up with a delighted smile—all pain forgotten—and exclaimed "Didn't it fly," and in a few minutes was at play again.

Mrs. Ernest decided that this was a suitable time for a chat with the nurse about nursery accidents, for, living in the country ten miles from the nearest doctor, it seemed necessary that Janet should have the knowledge which would enable her to act promptly in case of need during the mother's absence from the house.

"Are you at liberty, nurse, to have a talk about accidents that might happen to the children?"

"I'm all of a shake, ma'am, I got such a fright, but oh, ma'am, you're clever with the children."

Swallowing Buttons, Marbles, &c.—"Only because I knew what to do, Janet, and knowledge gives courage and calmness. Herbert has always been fond of trying to injure himself. When he was about three years old, he unscrewed a small brass knob, about the size of a small marble, off his

cot and swallowed it. I came in and found Mary trying to make him sick, which was quite advisable, but proved ineffectual. I must confess I felt horrified for a moment when she said what had happened, for I pictured a knob off the bed-corner, though I might have known that was impossible."

"What did you do, ma'am?"

"I did nothing at all, that is what I should recommend you to do in a similar case; it would, of course, in such a case, be a satisfaction to know that the missing article had come to light again, which can be very easily managed. It would have been much more dangerous had the child swallowed anything with a jagged edge or sharp points. We should then have also sent for the doctor in spite of the distance."

Choking.—"Suppose anything stuck in the throat, what would you do, ma'am?" said Janet.

"In a case of choking," said Mrs. Ernest, "very prompt action is necessary. Give, as you are always first prompted to do, a sharp stroke across the back with your hand, and, if this does not dislodge the enemy, put your finger down the child's throat, and hook up the obstruction. At the same time grip the child's nose firmly. If this fails, try to push the offender down, especially if you know it is something that will digest in the stomach—say a piece of apple. If anyone is present who is strong enough to seize the child by the feet, and hang him head downwards, giving a sharp stroke across the back at the same time, it is excellent, but I have tried to do that and found myself incapable."

Something in the Ear.—"My little brother once put a bead into his ear, ma'am, and my mother knocked it out by holding his head on one side and beating on the other," said Janet.

"A very doubtful remedy, Janet," said her mistress, "as in such treatment there lies danger to the drum of the beaten ear. The drum is so delicate that a good blow might rupture it, and render the child deaf for life. I once helped to get a pearl bead out of a little girl's ear with a hairpin, which we crooked at the end, but then the hole through the bead was distinctly visible, and we had nothing to do but insert the hook and draw it out very carefully. The safest thing to do is to make a loop of wire, carefully introduce it into the passage of the ear, turn it gently round till it gets behind

the foreign body, which can then be extracted. In the case of peas, or anything that might swell, do not drop anything liquid into the ear—though a little oil would be likely to hoist an insect."

Stings of Wasps, Ants, etc.—"Do you put any faith in the washer-woman's blue-bag, in case of a sting, ma'am?" said Janet.

"I must confess to having listened to an old wife's tale, Janet, for last summer, when the children's grandmother was stopping at the seaside with us, she was severely stung by a wasp. We applied ammonia or salvolatile—which, I believe, are one and the same thing—but she obtained no relief, and passed a bad night. Towards morning she insisted on trying the blue-bag, and the swelling and pain abated rapidly."

Cat Scratch.—Janet looked pleased to think the old time remedy should have been successful, and said "I am afraid the cat will scratch or bite the children, they do mawl so—Suppose she does, what must I do at once, ma'am?"

"Tie a handkerchief tightly above the place and suck it hard. If it still shows inflammatory symptoms after this, apply a bread and water poultice."

Dog Bite.—In the case of a dog bite, my first thought would be to get a doctor here. But at once I should proceed to tie something tightly above the wound—by above I do not mean over—and suck it hard, or even then to cauterize it—and, by every means I could devise, I should get the child into a great sweat—to get the poison out of the system. When a mad dog roves the country for miles, many more cows, dogs and horses are probably bitten and infected with rabies, than are ever put down or even suspected. Probably they cure themselves as nature dictates. In their frenzy they gallop and gallop round the field until the poison is sweated out of their system, then lie down exhausted. It would, at all events, be a wise plan to treat a child after these principles until the doctor could be got."

"I hope, Ma'am, we shall never have anything so terrible to treat, though one can never tell; for my part, since you began teaching me about these things, I have a perfect thirst to know more, there are so many other accidents that might happen among children."

Burns.—"Do you know," asked Mrs. Ernest, "what those

two bottles contain, with the lint and cotton wool round them, in the little yellow box in the press, Nurse?"

"No, Ma'am, but the children call it the burn box," answered Janet.

"Get it for me," said Mrs. Ernest, and continued: "in this bottle is linseed oil, in that, lime water, these two, mixed in equal quantities, are the finest application possible in a case of burns or scalds. I fitted up this little box several years ago, when Nora burnt herself seriously. She held a duster over the guard, and it caught fire, in fact, it was her intention that it should do so. Then, in her terror, as the flame rose, she ran about the nursery, holding on to the burning rag, her pinafore also blazing. By the time I got to the nursery, nurse had wisely and promptly rolled her tightly in a woollen dressing gown. Fortunately, only her hand was burnt, and I immediately dressed the wound with this mixture. The thing is to exclude the air. The child received a shock, and had to be kept very quiet for a time."

"Miss Nora is a mischief, ma'am; if there is a scrape, she would find her way into it."

Mrs. Ernest laughed as she thought of her high-spirited child, and remarked: "Yes, Janet, but I think she had a lesson that time—she screamed for a long time. I felt very thankful when the pain abated, and she sobbed herself to sleep after drinking a little hot milk, which, being quickly digested, is a grand antidote to exhaustion."

"You have great regard for milk, ma'am," Janet said.

"Naturally, Janet, it is the children's friend, but I must tell you of its virtues in another lesson. At present we must keep to our accidents."

Scald.—"It was not very long after this that we had occasion to turn out the yellow box again, for cook scalded her face at the washhouse boiler. She immediately put flour on her face, which was wise, as that is a good air excluder, but I remember her skin was more difficult after this to examine and dress, and did not heal so quickly nor so well as Nora's hand."

Lime in the Eye.—"Anne says that the gardener's little boy at the Hermitage lost his eye when they were building the new stables, by splashing lime into it," said Janet.

"It was so," said Mrs. Ernest, "I remember the accident

very well. Quite a boy's trick. No one knew what to do, and his cries were terrible, I believe. Now we all know when too late. His sight might have been saved had he been laid down and the eye well drenched with tepid water, and immediately some simple oil—salad, olive or sweet—poured in, and as the lime rose to the surface of it, a piece of blotting-paper used to take it out. As it was, the sight was burnt out before the doctor could attend."

"Please go on, ma'am. What do the children do to each other when they say they are saving a drowned man? I told them it was wicked to play at drowning, but they said 'mother shewed us,' said the nurse."

"I deemed it advisable to teach Mary and the children how to resuscitate—that is to restore, if possible, the action of the vital organs after immersion under the water. Once there was a great ice accident at Kensington, and many persons were, after long and patient efforts, restored. I believe the heart and lungs of the poor things acted again after the body had been under water for some hours. Living as we do on the borders of a large sheet of water, and by many deep pools, I naturally picture a drowning accident, and decided it wise for all of us to know how to act promptly."

"I know how to do it, ma'am, I've watched the children so often, and I notice that the one who is supposed to be dead puts out his tongue ready to be tied down."

"Suppose you describe to me how it is done, Janet. I have been talking long. I will correct you if you make a mistake," said Mrs. Ernest. Janet proceeded—

Resuscitation.—"Turn the body over on the face to let the water out of the mouth; wipe dry both nose and mouth; tie down the tongue with the handiest thing after drawing it well out. Loose all braces and tight clothing, and go behind the head of the patient; kneel down, grasp the arms above the elbows, draw both arms well back over the head to full stretch and count ten, then bring the arms forward and downwards, pressing the elbows well into the sides of the chest, hold them there and count ten again."

"Very clearly put, Janet," said Mrs. Ernest.

"I will proceed. After a natural breath has been drawn, may be after many hours, proceed to give brandy, and warm in blankets, and rub the patient's legs and arms towards the heart."

"I shall feel more comfortable to leave the Vale for a few hours, now that I know you understand this art, if we may call it so, for I do not like to check the children too much in their climbing and rambling up the streams and round the lake—it spoils their fearless happy natures. Yet sometimes I shudder to think what might happen, as I see Jack and Elsie spring from rock to slippery stones, and on again like kingfishers past the pools.

"I hope Dodd will be back directly from the vicarage. You told him to go at once I suppose, and wait for an answer, did you not, Annie."

"Yes, ma'am; and there he is, coming up the drive with a letter in his hand."

Dislocated Arm.—"I sent him down to ask Mrs. Bruce how she treated her baby, Dora, when the nurse pulled her from the floor by one arm, and dislocated it, during romps. It is on the whole a common accident, because the arm fits into an exceedingly shallow socket, to enable us to move it freely into any position."

Mrs. Ernest here opened her letter and read to the two nurses thus:—"After cutting off all baby's clothes we put a pad under the armpit, and another between the elbow and the body, and a third between the hand and body; then we wound a bandage round the arm, hand, and body three times, then twice over the injured shoulder, across the chest and under the arms, then over the other shoulder and fastened with a safety pin. Our bandage had the appearance of a pair of braces."

"I should never do all that, ma'am," Janet began; "it is doctor's work."

"You must practice, Janet, on an uninjured child, for Mrs. Bruce goes on to say how thankful she felt that she had had ambulance lessons. She probably prevented much pain and inflammation before the doctor came."

"Listen, again, to Mrs. Bruce's words. She says, 'One of our children fell against the garden gate and was much bruised on the cheek and forehead. I feared a swelled face painted with the most brilliant colours, but hopefully put on plenty of boracic and ointment. The next morning no swelling appeared, and in two or three days all signs of the blow had disappeared. I would not recommend the use

of arnica—if the skin is only slightly broken it is dangerous, as erysipelas is likely to set in.'"

Cuts.—"You used boracic powder, ma'am, when Master Jack cut his head open on the table corner."

"Yes, Nurse, I did; but first I bathed the ugly wound with boracic powder dissolved in hot water, about a tea-spoonful to one pint. No mother's medicine chest should be without these simple remedies. A pad dipped in the solution is very healing and very clean."

"Have you any other experience to relate, Janet, that we might add to our list?" said Mrs. Ernest.

Concussion of brain.—"Only one that I remember. One of Mrs. Graham's little boys fell from the swing, and the doctor said he had slight concussion of the brain. He was quite stunned. We put him to bed at once, and the doctor ordered him to be kept very quiet, and he was not allowed to taste anything but milk and soda, as he said it was most important that the food should be easily digested during this illness. The little boy joined his class in a fortnight, and suffered no after effects."

"The other children are coming in now," said Mrs. Ernest, "so we will end our talk for to-day. Next week we will take convulsions, and I will try to explain the signs of the beginning of illnesses, such as measles, chicken-pox, scarlet fever, &c., so that you may not make the mistake of a mother I know, who told me one day that her children had had a spring rash for several days, but they had gone to school, and had been at a party the night before. As I was leaving the house I saw one of the boys, and the mother showed me some spots, when I was able to tell her, as Nora had had it, that her children had chicken-pox. In a week over forty children had it in the village. I then thought how useful it would be to have a list of illnesses, with description of the first appearance of each. You see we can give away knowledge to benefit others, and be richer instead of poorer after parting with it, inasmuch as repetition strengthens our own knowledge."

[If any nurse would like to ask any questions, "the Mothers" would be very glad to answer any questions addressed to Mrs. Ernest, House of Education, Ambleside.]